

Business support scheme to boost UK space industry has lift off

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A scheme to boost the UK's space businesses, and alert more firms to the possibilities space-related enterprise can bring is set to be launched by the UK Space Agency.

The up to 10-week Business Accelerator programme, delivered in partnership with business growth experts from Entrepreneurial Spark and The University of Strathclyde, offers free virtual sessions to help companies with their sights set on space to make progress.

Businesses that may not have previously considered the opportunities presented by the space industry can also benefit. Pre-launch activity already involves a nationwide targeting of relevant businesses to alert them to the possibilities for growth.

The scheme, getting under way in early March, has been dubbed a "voyage of discovery" and aims to find entrepreneurs from a wide range of sectors to strengthen the UK's space industry infrastructure.

Space has transformed into one of the UK's fastest growing sectors, trebling in size since 2010. The UK space industry now employs close to 42,000 people across the country and generates an income of nearly £15 billion every year – and the government, via the UK Space Agency, wants to accelerate that growth.

Catherine Mealing-Jones, Director of Growth at The UK Space Agency, said:

"The space sector is ripe with opportunity, and as the UK recovers from the Covid pandemic this new support programme will bring in diverse ideas and talent to realise that growth opportunity.

"A practical approach to how to develop a business, combined with access to experts who can guide success are hallmarks of the programme. This is coupled with an holistic focus on supporting truly sustainable businesses to ensure that the space sector can provide new long-term secure employment right around the country.

"Key to this approach is bringing innovators together in existing and new clusters of space-related activity, thereby gathering critical mass which will also benefit adjacent parts of the economy. The relationship with universities is also key and provides a pathway for students into the sector and for vibrant knowledge exchange for business."

The UK is already a world leader in space science, in producing small satellites, and utilising space data; and as part of the government's strategy of achieving 10% of the global space market share by 2030. SMEs in this sector are growing by 30% per annum and there is a real opportunity to get more businesses involved in exploring how space technology can enable their growth.

Sectors targeted include:

Manufacturing

Engineering
Robotics
Computer and data science
Autonomous vehicles (self-driving cars)

Businesses of any size can take part. These include those that are:

1. In the Space sector already and looking to grow
2. Using Space technology as part of their business
3. Open to exploring expansion into the Space Sector – these may include conservation, archaeology, sustainability, economics, finance, law and lifestyle and health.

Under the scheme, two strands of support are available:

Business Horizons is a series of eight one-off events. The events are one hour each, with a “rich series of orbital activities”. The first event is set for Monday, March 8.

Leo (which stands for Low Earth Orbit, named after the orbit satellites use to travel the Earth) is a 10-week programme designed to inject pace, with entrepreneurs emerging with momentum and a clear strategy for 90 days of targeted activity to help them make progress in the UK space programme.

Companies of any size are welcome to take part.

Scotland is particularly strong within the UK’s space sector. The Scottish space industry also punches well above its weight and is home to almost a fifth of the total jobs in the UK sector, valued at £880 million in 2017-18.

Sarah Burns, Space Cluster Development Manager of The University of Strathclyde said:

“Scotland’s space sector has seen impressive growth over the past years and this business support programme is a great example of how universities play an important role in this growth and the business eco-system. By translating research and innovative ideas into the business and commercial worlds, and as a ‘Place of Useful Learning’, the University of Strathclyde is well-placed to support businesses wishing to explore space as a business opportunity. This programme allows us to engage with the amazing start-ups and businesses that are becoming interested in the opportunities that the space sector can enable in their respective sectors, all of which supports the growth of what is an exciting and rapidly expanding UK space sector.”

Mike Stephens, CEO of Entrepreneurial Spark, added: “Space is a truly exciting industry right now, with ground-breaking developments happening all the time. SMEs in this sector are growing by 30% per annum and there is a real opportunity to get more businesses involved in exploring how space technology can enable growth for them. Entrepreneurs have a massive role to play in generating an inclusive economic recovery, and mobilising them in Space sector has the potential deliver this across the whole of the UK. You may

not even realise you are using space technology in your business, and the opportunities that are open to you as a result. This is a world-class programme of free support, delivered virtually reaching every corner of the UK. Now is the time for action and our partnership is there to support space entrepreneurs every step of the way.”

To find out more about the UKSA’s Business Accelerator programme, entrepreneurs and company directors should visit: <https://www.entrepreneurial-spark.com/space-accelerator>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the UK Space Agency

The UK Space Agency leads the UK’s efforts to explore and benefit from space, with responsibility for all strategic decisions on the UK civil space programme. It ensures Government investments in space science and technology deliver significant value to the UK economy and people’s lives. As set out in the Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency works with industry to develop new technologies, infrastructure and services, and to ensure the UK thrives in the commercial space age.

The UK Space Agency:

- Supports the work of the UK space sector at home and abroad, maximising its benefit to the UK’s growing economy
- Invests in science and exploration to increase our understanding of the universe and deliver practical benefits such as new technologies to life on Earth
- Inspires the next generation of UK scientists and engineers
- Provides a safe and supportive regulatory environment for the launch and operation of UK spacecraft, launch operators and UK spaceports
- Promotes global co-operation in space, through the UK’s membership of the European Space Agency and international partnerships

The UK Space Agency is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial

Strategy.

Entrepreneurial Spark is a free business accelerator offering support to start-up companies and entrepreneurs. Based in the UK, it is a global company, whose mission is to drive up the success rate of entrepreneurs in every corner of the world.

The University of Strathclyde has a solid track record in successfully hosting UKSA incubator programmes, and has the largest space engineering group in Europe, offering deep engagement with industry and academia.

For more details contact

- UKSA: Colin Baldwin (colin.baldwin@ukspaceagency.gov.uk) or 07788 178 187
- Entrepreneurial Spark: Mike Stephens (mike@entrepreneurial-spark.com) or 07495 058 931

The University of Strathclyde: Sarah Burns (sarah.burns@strath.ac.uk)